

**CALFED OPERATIONS COORDINATION GROUP
AUGUST 24, 1999 MEETING NOTES AND ACTION ITEMS**

Review of July 27 meeting notes

No revisions were made to the July 27, CALFED Ops meeting notes.

Announcements

John Leahigh has been promoted to Chief of Scheduling Section, Operations and Maintenance for the Department of Water Resources. Kate Le is the new scribe for Ops.

Chet Bowling, who has been the Water Operations Supervisor for the CVP for the past years, has been temporarily reassigned to work on special projects. During his absence, Bob Edwards is the interim Water Operations Supervisor.

The following handouts were provided at the meeting:

1. Preliminary Information on Spring run Chinook Salmon Escapement for August 1999, DFG, Jim White
2. Annual Estimated Winter-Run Chinook Salmon Run Size at Red Bluff Diversion Dam for 1967-1998 period, NMFS, Gary Stern
3. Splittail Update for CALFED Ops August 24, 1999, DFG, Randy Baxter
4. Delta Smelt Update 8/24/99 CALFED Ops Group Meeting, DFG, Jim White
5. Letter to USFWS Director from DWR Director regarding Grantline barrier erroneous operation, DWR, Mark Holderman
6. Plots of Sacramento River 1999 Temp Ops displaying temperature and releases at SHD, SPP, KWK, and BND from mid-April through mid-August. Also, plots of Shasta Weighted Temp. vs. Flow. USBR, Jeff Sandberg
7. SWP Operations Package, DWR, Larry Gage
8. Summary of Terms and Conditions in SWRCB Water Right Orders Setting Water Temperature Objectives in the Upper Sacramento River For the Protection of Fishery Resources, SWRCB, Nick Wilcox
9. Letter from USCOE to DWR approving for temporary 500cfs increase in the three day average diversion rate at Clifton Court Forebay, DWR, Victor Pacheco

SWRCB

Arthur G. Baggett, Jr., has been appointed the new Board member, but no news yet on the fifth member. The four current Board members are as follow:

James M. Stubchaer: Fills the positions of registered professional engineer. For 31 years, Mr. Stubchaer worked for the *Santa Barbara Flood Control and Water Conservation District* as the Chief Flood Control Engineer and Water Manager. From 1989 until his appointment to the *State Water Board*, Mr. Stubchaer was a consulting engineer in private practice. He is a former member of the *Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board*. (Term expires: January 15, 2000).

Mary Jane Forster: Fills the position of public member. Prior to working at the State Water Board, Ms. Foster had been the Governmental Affairs Manager for the *Municipal Water District* of Orange County since 1986. She also served on the *San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board* since 1984. Ms. Forster was a member of the *National Drinking Water Advisory Council* which developed the major regulations for the **Safe Drinking Water Act**. (Term expires: January 15, 2001)

John W. Brown: Fills the position of registered civil engineer with expertise in water rights. Mr. Brown was an Associate at *Camp, Dresser and McKee Inc.*, an engineering consulting firm, which provides services for water resource planning, design and operations. Prior to that, he served for 13 years as Chief Engineer of the *Engineering and Water Department* for the Irvine Company. (Term expires: January 15, 2001)

Arthur G. Baggett, Jr.: Fills the position of attorney member. Mr. Baggett was an attorney in private practice. He holds a Master's Degree in Environmental Studies from *Antioch College* and a law degree from *San Joaquin College of Law*. He served two terms on the Board of *Supervisors of Mariposa County*. As a scientist and teacher, Mr. Baggett served as a faculty member for the *Yosemite Institute*, the *Sierra Institute of UC Santa Cruz*, the *Yosemite Association*, and as Adjunct Faculty at *Fresno State University* in the Department of Chemistry. (Term expires: January 15, 2003)

As for the fifth member, the term expires on January 15, 2002.

The Natomas hearings continue with two additional days scheduled for August 25 and 26 of 1999. The hearing was a result of objections filed by the State Water Project Contractors, DWR, and USBR against Natomas Central Mutual Water Company on a petition for a temporary water transfer.

Background: On April 26, 1999, Natomas Central Mutual Water Company (Natomas) in cooperation with Western Water Company (WWC) petitioned for a temporary water transfer for a period of one year or less. On May 17, 1999, the petition was publicly noticed by the SWRCB. SWP Contractors, DWR, and USBR filed objections. Natomas modified its petition by letters dated June 21, 1999 and July 20, 1999. After several meetings with Natomas to discuss the proposed transfer and information Natomas provided, the Division of Water Rights was unable to make the necessary findings to approve the transfer, thus a hearing resulted.

Update: A total of four hearing days have concluded. Once closing arguments are submitted, the Board will make a decision.

Research of water rights permits for power plant/industrial facilities diverting along lower San Joaquin River/Suisun Bay did not produce any available records. However, these facilities may have other rights due to their location.

Fishery Status

Spring-Run Chinook Salmon: DFG provided a handout which summarizes information on spring-run Chinook salmon escapement for year 1995 through 1999. The preliminary 1999 survey data at 7 sites are as follow:

Antelope Creek: 40 adults

Big Chico Creek: N/A. Scheduled to be surveyed next month.

Butte Creek: preliminary number is 3,500 adults, however, may be higher once the count is complete.

Clear Creek: about 15-20 adults.

Cottonwood/Beegum Creek: N/A.

Deer Creek: 1591 adults

Mill Creek: N/A until November. Will be surveyed mid-September through October.

It was noted that tissue samples of adults will be taken for DNA analysis once spawning is complete for all surveys.

NMFS is working with Reclamation to increase flows on Clear Creek. The increased flows will improve temperatures for spring-run that may spawn this year in Clear Creek. It is believed that high temperature in Clear Creek would result in 100% mortality of the run this year.

ACTION ITEM- DWR (Curtis Creel) will work with DFG (Jim White) and NMFS (Gary Stern) to provide an updated Spring-Run Protection Plan for the next CALFED Ops meeting.

Steelhead: NMFS plans to publish a proposed 4d rule in the Federal Register in about 6-8 weeks. The 4d rule refers to the section of the Endangered Species Act for developing take prohibitions for species listed as threatened. (take of "endangered" species is automatically prohibited) NMFS is continuing to work on the one year biological opinion for steelhead and the conference opinion for spring-run. Next month, it will present the proposed actions that will be in the opinion. The final notice for fall-run, late fall-run, and spring-run listings will be made available on September 9, 1999.

Update: On September 9, 1999 NMFS sent out a public notice on listing of sub-species. Listed as threatened are the California Central Valley Spring-Run chinook ESU and the new California Coastal chinook ESU (Redwood Creek in Humboldt County south through the Russian River).

In response to a question regarding Stanislaus releases, the NMFS stated that it would want the USBR and stakeholders to continue to provide water for temperature benefits. South Delta Water Agency expressed interest in a presentation at a future Ops Group meeting on the benefits of the Stanislaus release for Steelhead.

Winter-Run Chinook Salmon: NMFS indicated that last month's reported numbers of adult salmon were for all races, not just winter-run. NMFS is working on an estimate of winter-run adults, and should be able to present it at the next Ops meeting.

Splittail: The 1999 data indicate that this is the 5th consecutive year for splittail to successfully reproduce throughout their range at locations where they are expected to be found, however, reduced floodplain inundation this year may have resulted in reduced spawning success compared to 1995 and 1998, but higher than 1997. Young-of-the-year splittail salvage at State and federal fish facilities indicated either late spawning or delayed emigration from the San Joaquin River since salvage numbers peaked in July 1999, instead of May-June as in prior years.

Information of recent trends on splittail abundance and distribution can be found at the web address: <http://www2.delta.dfg.ca.gov/reports/splittail/>

Delta Smelt: A handout was provided by DFG showing the results of the three annual delta smelt townet surveys conducted on June 21-25, July 5-9, and July 19-23, 1999. Distribution was found to be mainly from Suisun and Grizzly Bays to the lower Sacramento River. Salvage levels are low. The final 1999 index was reported as 11.9, which is up from the 1998 index of 3.3. However, the index is still below the pre-decline average of 20.4 (1959-1981, no sampling '66-'68). Delta smelt distribution will be provided by the Fall Midwater Trawl, starting on September 7, 1999.

There was a discussion on the relevance of using the summer townet surveys for delta smelt population estimates since the surveys were initially developed for striped bass. This issue is currently being addressed by IEP.

No Name Group

A subgroup was scheduled to convene the week of September 6, 1999 to develop actions to address potential future San Luis low-point problems, however, these meetings have been postponed. Although there may be some similarities to the Environmental Water Account process, this process is more focused on the use of existing available tools to address potential year 2000 San Luis low-point and Delta Smelt concerns.

ACTION ITEM—NNG will convene a subgroup to develop year 2000 San Luis low-point actions.

Operations

Mitten Crab: Installation of the K-rail at the approach channel to the Skinner Fish Facility started on July 23, 1999 and was completed in early August.. DWR plans to install grizzly screens at the Clifton Court Forebay gate structure in September. DWR will meet with fishery agencies to develop a monitoring plan for the K-rail and screen. The travelling screen has been delivered to the Tracy Fish Facility, but has not been installed. USBR completed the agreement for disposal of mitten crabs collected at the Tracy facility.

Temporary Barriers: All three barriers are in place and operating. A recent field inspection at Middle River barrier identified one flap gate not operating, and work is in progress to fix the problem. The remaining three of the total fifteen fish screens are being installed at Sherman Island to mitigate for barriers. The

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installation process should be completed in mid-October. Planning staff continues to work with SDWA staff to finalize the permit process for Fall Head of Old River barrier. The Fall Head of Old River barrier is anticipated to be installed sometime in mid-September at the request of DFG.

Update: A broken flap gate identified at Middle River barrier was replaced and operational as of September 10, 1999.

The Grantline Canal barrier was erroneously placed into operation from June 23 to July 12. Under the provisions contained in the April 26, 1996 Biological Opinion for the Temporary Barrier Project issued by USFWS, barrier operation was to have been suspended from June 1 to July 23 due to the implementation of the "yellow light" plan contained in the opinion. A letter to the USFWS detailing the incident was made available at the meeting.

Delta Operations Criteria: Currently, operations are controlled by outflow requirements, specifically, the 7-day average outflow of greater than or equal to 3,000 cfs. To date, the projects have met 234 days of 240 days requirements of 150 mg/l at Contra Costa Canal pumping plant #1. Salinity is increasing slightly, however, water quality remains good.

CVP/SWP Operations Status: Friant releases continue with an additional 300 cfs to benefit Cottonwood tree habitat downstream along the San Joaquin River, but will be declining to normal releases. Flows on the Stanislaus are about 500 cfs, which includes water purchased for temperature improvement. The purchased water release will continue through September. Temperature monitoring data are being collected. Vernalis flow is steady and will remain at about 2,000 cfs. All reservoirs, except San Luis, will start next year with a good carryover supply.

Since August 6, 1999, the total increased diversion at Clifton Court Forebay is about 14,000 acre-feet. This temporary increased diversion of 500 cfs from August 6, 1999 through September 30, 1999, was approved by the USACE.

A letter of permission from the USACE was made available at the meeting.

Sacramento Upstream Temperature Requirements: USBR met the 56 F temperature requirements at Bend Bridge during the summer and plans to comply also for the fall. This is the first year the USBR installed temperature probes in all the penstocks at the Shasta Temperature Control Device to collect temperature data and learn more regarding how gate openings affect temperature downstream.

The SWRCB presented background information on Sacramento River temperature control requirements. From 1990-1992, three water right orders were issued by the SWRCB which established water temperature objectives in the upper Sacramento River for the protection of fishery resources. On May 2, 1990, the SWRCB adopted Order WR 90-5, which requires the USBR to fulfill seven conditions. USBR and the Central Valley Project Water Association each filed a lawsuit against the SWRCB stating that the Board violated CEQA by adopting WR 90-5. A settlement between the litigation parties brought about WR 91-1, which set forth two conditions amending WR 90-5. On March 19, 1992, the SWRCB adopted a temporary order WR 92-2 to protect winter-run chinook salmon during the extremely dry 1992 water year. The order only applied in 1992, and contained four USBR upstream operational conditions. All conditions contained in WR 90-5, WR 91-1, and WR 92-2 are detailed in the handout provided at the meeting.

To date, WR 90-5, as amended remains the operational order. However, one of the conditions in WR 90-5 which states the temperature compliance site (i.e. Red Bluff) conflicts with the NMFS Winter-run biological opinion temperature compliance site (i.e. Bend Bridge). The Board does not object to Bend Bridge as the temperature compliance site since it was requested by the temperature task group, but indicated that this issue needs to be re-visited to handle the inconsistency of compliance sites between the Biological Opinion and WR 90-5.

Revised Joint Point of Diversion Request: USBR 1999/2000 proposals for JPOD assume all b(2) actions in place and all SWP impacts are recovered. In both the 50% and 90% hydrology scenarios, JPOD use in October and November would be during balanced conditions, and excess conditions in January and February. Under the 90% hydrology, about 183 TAF would be pumped for the CVP and the CVP share of San Luis would be filled, and under the 50% hydrology, about 123 TAF would be pumped for the CVP.

Make Up Plan: Although the reduction in SWP exports was about 324 TAF, DWR believes there is a 90% chance that all of the water can be recovered. However, there remains a significant risk to interruptible supplies: there is a 40% chance the impact could be 75 TAF or higher. In addition to SWP impacts, the CVP will probably not fill its share of San Luis storage by April. The current make-up plan includes various scenarios to recover San Luis storage. The actions being considered are:

- Increasing the allowable export in August and September. The U.S. Corps of Engineers approved a temporary change in the allowable inflow to Clifton Court Forebay; the inflow has been increased up to 7,180 cfs. This action could result in up to 55,000 acre-feet of water being transferred from storage

in Northern California to San Luis Reservoir. Since August 6, when the increase was implemented, the State Water Project has successfully moved 14,000 acre-feet.

- Reducing Delta outflow in November to allow up to 30,000 acre-feet of additional pumping. This proposed action is to modify the outflow objective for November from 4,500 cfs to 4,000 cfs. The outflow objective is contained in the Delta Accord, the State Water Resources Control Board 1995 Water Quality Control Plan, and the project descriptions contained in the delta smelt and winter-run chinook biological opinions. In order to modify this objective, the Bureau of Reclamation and the Department of Water Resources would coordinate with the National Marine Fisheries Service, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Department of Fish and Game. This action would be terminated if any of the indicators of spring-run yearling movement were triggered. These indicators are contained in the 1998 CALFED Ops Group Spring-run Protection Plan; this plan will be updated to reflect current conditions.

During the Ops Group meeting, several concerns were raised concerning this action.

- The Bay Institute believes that fishery protection measures during November are minimal; therefore, it argues against reducing outflow.
- The Bay Institute also believes the outflow objective is, for all intents and purposes, a standard, not an objective the CVP and SWP are voluntarily operating to meet. The SWRCB is in the process of allocating responsibility for meeting the objectives contained in the 1995 WQCP.
- The Contra Costa Water District is concerned about potential water quality impacts resulting from lower outflow. If CCWD is forced to make additional blending releases from its Los Vaqueros reservoir, then it would realize higher blending costs and have potential risks (due to lower reservoir storage) to its future water supplies. By limiting the outflow reduction to 500 cfs, however, DWR and Reclamation believe these risks are minimized.
- Delaying the reduction in releases from Oroville to the Feather River. This proposed action would allow the SWP to transfer up to 58,000 acre-feet of additional project water to San Luis Reservoir. In accordance with DFG agreement, DWR maintains releases to the Feather River to below 2,500 cfs from mid-October through November. If the flow exceeds 2,500 cfs as a result of non-flood releases, then DWR must maintain higher flows until March. This proposed action would delay implementation of the ramp down

in river releases and allow the release to remain above 2,500 cfs until November 1.

At the Ops Group meeting, DFG expressed concern about potential impacts to rearing juvenile salmon in the Feather River and concluded that it would have to carefully review any proposal to change river release criteria. The Ops Group recommends that DWR coordinate with NMFS, FWS, and DFG to modify the action if needed.

- Using joint point of diversion to fill the CVP share of San Luis Reservoir. Based on current projections, the CVP will not fill its share of San Luis Reservoir by April 2000. Not filling San Luis Reservoir next year could seriously impact operational flexibility. This proposed action would use available SWP pumping capability to export water that is excess to the Delta or from CVP storage. To implement this action, Reclamation will need to seek approval from the SWRCB for either a temporary urgency change of point of diversion for the CVP or point of diversion under Water Right Order 98-9.

ACTION ITEM—The Ops Plan will be updated to include use of JPOD for filling the CVP share of San Luis Reservoir. The updated plan will be presented to the CALFED Small Group along with reaction of participants at the next Ops Group meeting.

Agenda items for Next Meeting . . . September 28, 1999